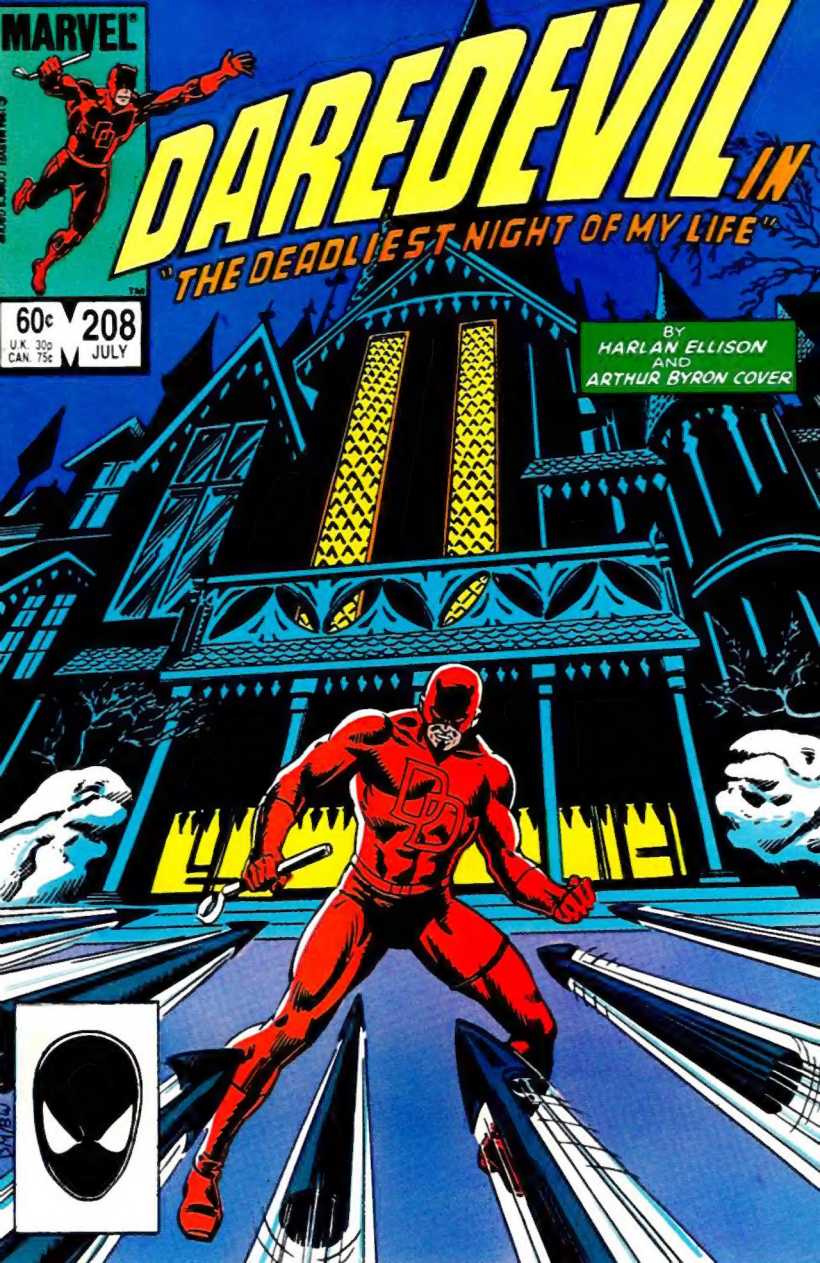
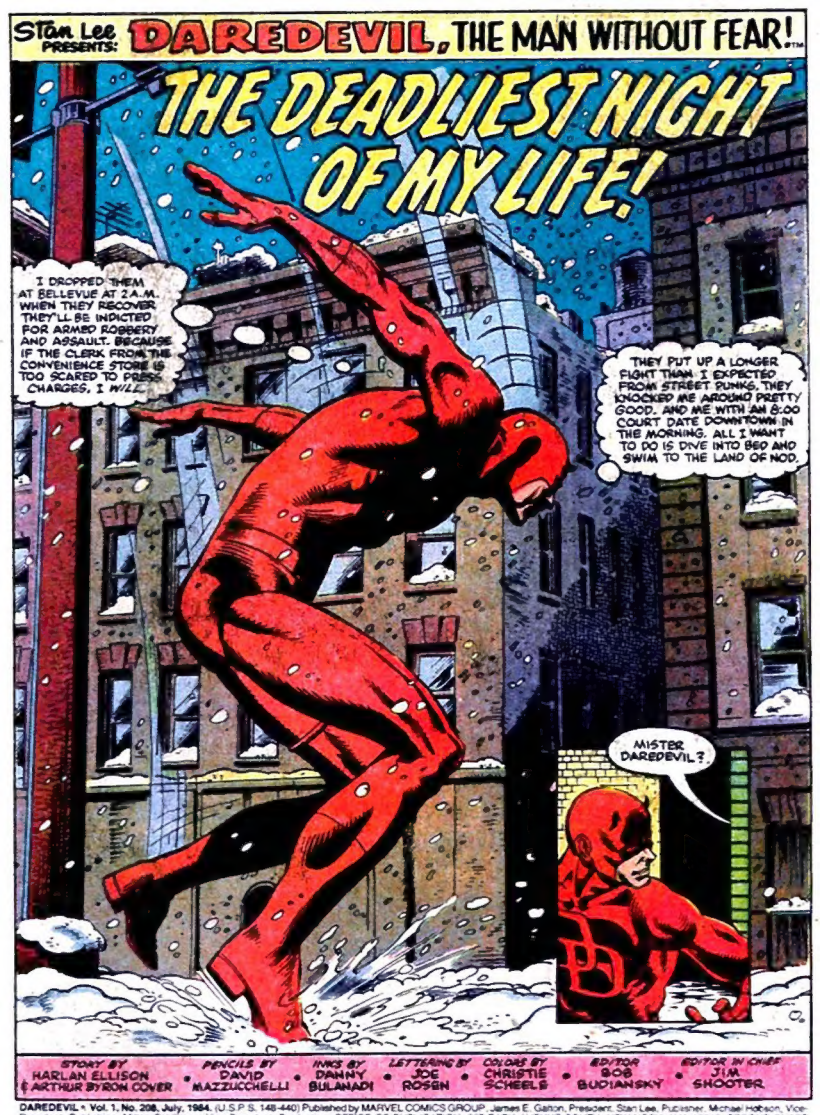

MARVEL
DAREDEVIL IN
"THE DEADLIEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE"
BY
HARLAN ELLISON
AND
ARTHUR BYRON COVER
60¢
U.K. 30p
CAN. 75¢
208
JULY



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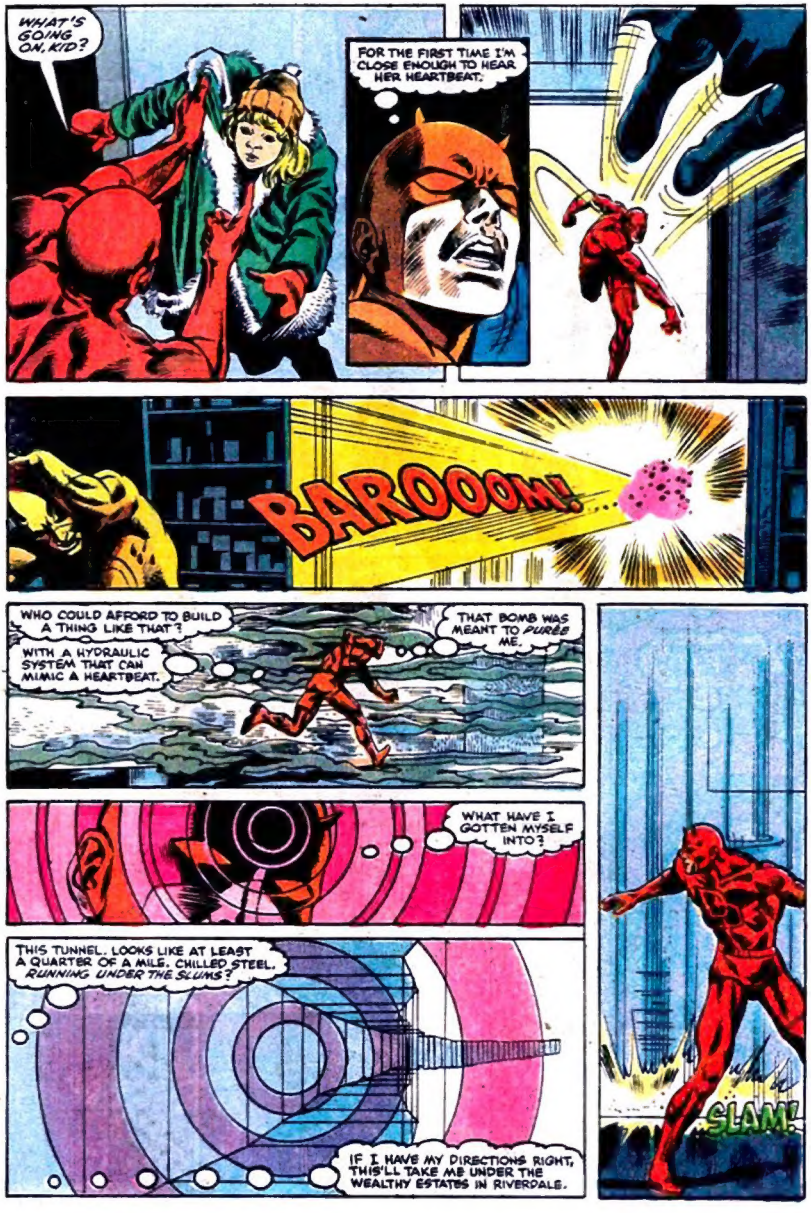
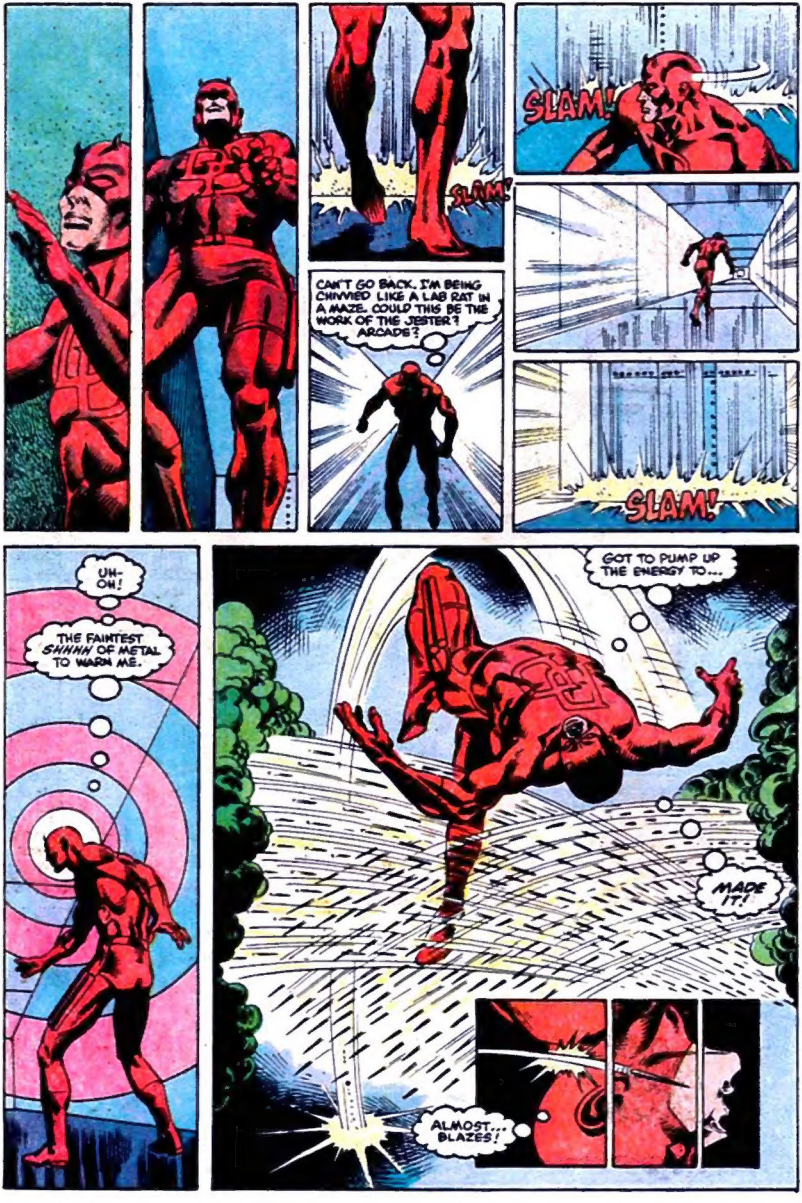
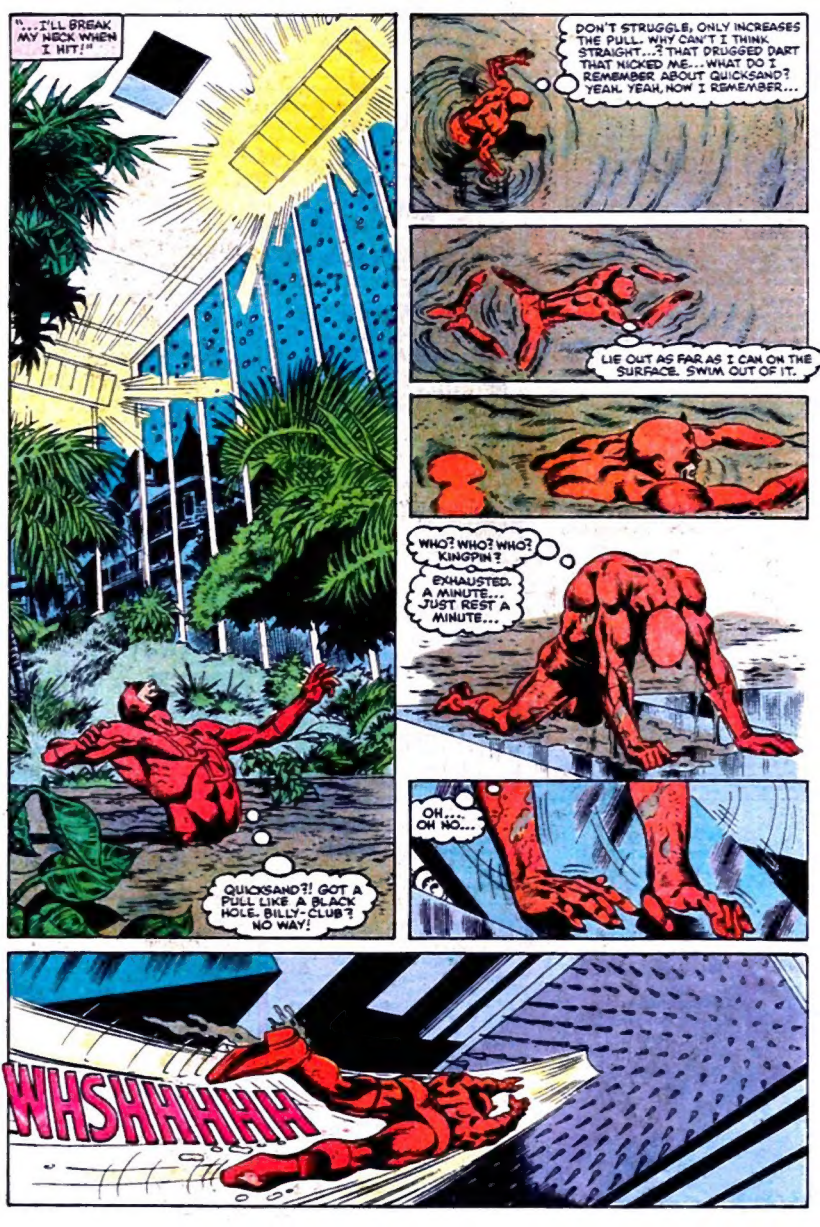
MY MOMMY'S IN TROUBLE! PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, COME AND HELP!
SOMETHING'S WRONG. PAIN AND FEAR IN THE KID'S VOICE. THE SNOW...THE DISTANCE SHE'S KEEPING BETWEEN US...THE BEATING I TOOK...FUZZY...CAN'T READ HER HEARTBEAT.
SHE WANTS ME TO FOLLOW.
MOVES FAST FOR SUCH A LITTLE KID.
OR MAYBE I'M JUST TOO SORE TO KEEP UP.
DOWN HERE, MISTER DAREDEVIL! HURRY, PLEASE!
WHERE'S YOUR MOTHER?
SLAM!

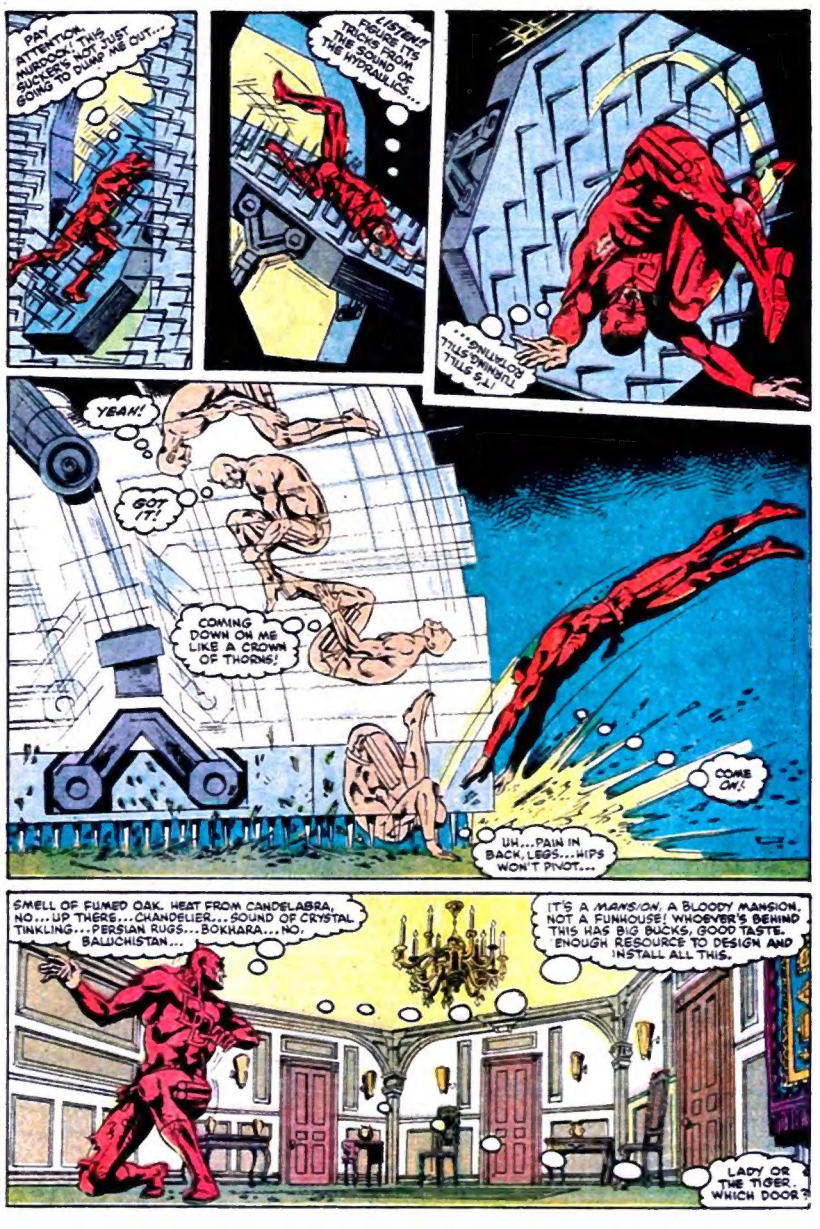

WHAT'S GOING ON, KID?
FOR THE FIRST TIME I'M CLOSE ENOUGH TO HEAR HER HEARTBEAT.
BAROOOM!
WHO COULD AFFORD TO BUILD A THING LIKE THAT?
WITH A HYDRAULIC SYSTEM THAT CAN MIMIC A HEARTBEAT.
THAT BOMB WAS MEANT TO *PURGE* ME.
WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?
THIS TUNNEL. LOOKS LIKE AT LEAST A QUARTER OF A MILE. CHILLED STEEL. *RUNNING UNDER THE SLUMS?*
IF I HAVE MY DIRECTIONS RIGHT, THIS'LL TAKE ME UNDER THE WEALTHY ESTATES IN RIVERDALE.
SLAM!


SLAM!
SLAM!
CAN'T GO BACK. I'M BEING CHIVVIED LIKE A LAB RAT IN A MAZE. COULD THIS BE THE WORK OF THE JESTER? ARCADE?
SLAM!
UH-OH!
THE FAINTEST SHHHH OF METAL TO WARN ME.
GOT TO PUMP UP THE ENERGY TO...
MADE IT!
ALMOST... BLAZES!

SOMEBODY'S SCRAMBLING MY BRAINS AND FRYING THEM FOR BREAKFAST.
RADAR SENSE COMPLETELY WONKY. THAT DART MUST'VE BEEN COATED WITH SOME KIND OF HALLUCINOGEN.
CAN'T GET MY BEARINGS.
OH NO...IS THIS A TUNNEL...OR... OH,,IT'S THE BARREL OF A...
CAN'T STAND THIS HEAT...
PAIN IN MY HEAD...
WEAK.
SOCKETS WHERE MY EYES USED TO BE... BURNING...
CAN'T TELL IF TUNNEL'S CLIMBING OR DROPPING... AM I ABOVEGROUND OR UNDER...
COLD... SO COLD...

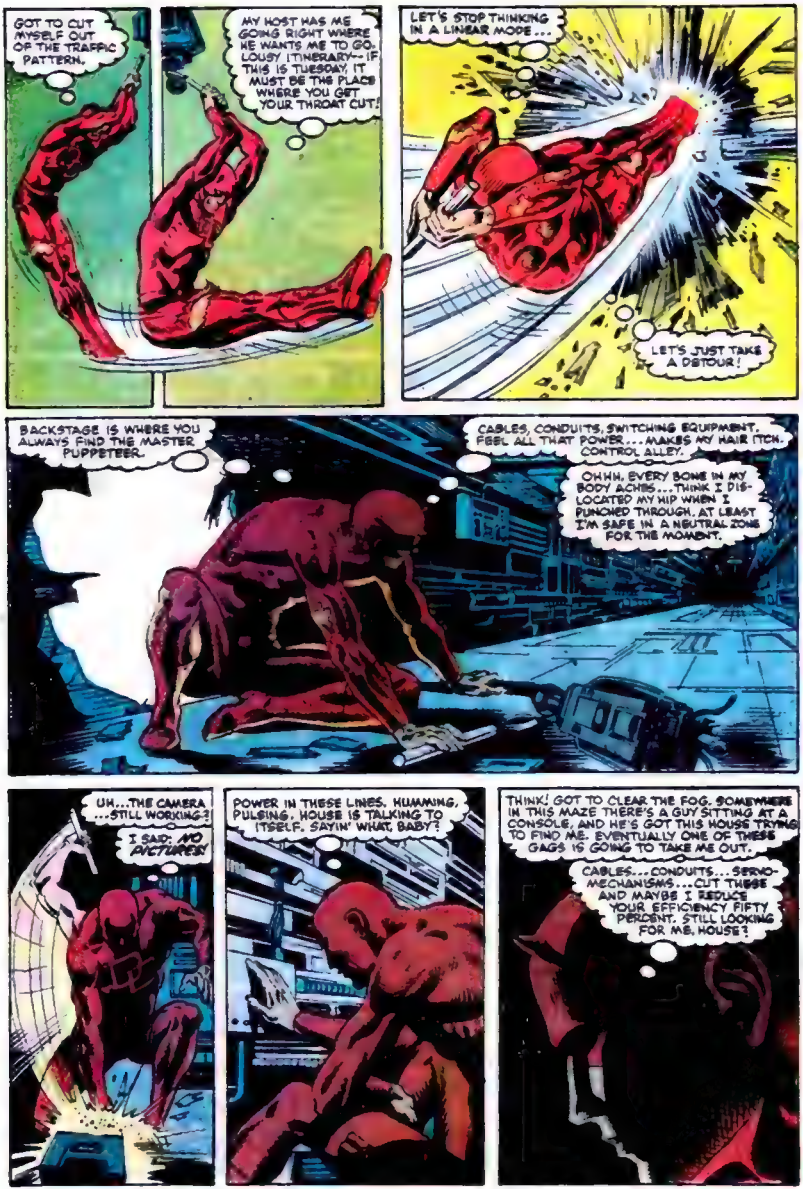

"...I'LL BREAK MY NECK WHEN I HIT!"
QUICKSAND?! GOT A PULL LIKE A BLACK HOLE. BILLY-CLUB? NO WAY!
DON'T STRUGGLE, ONLY INCREASES THE PULL. WHY CAN'T I THINK STRAIGHT...? THAT DRUGGED DART THAT NICKED ME... WHAT DO I REMEMBER ABOUT QUICKSAND? YEAH, YEAH, NOW I REMEMBER...
LIE OUT AS FAR AS I CAN ON THE SURFACE. SWIM OUT OF IT.
WHO? WHO? WHO? KINGPIN?
EXHAUSTED. A MINUTE... JUST REST A MINUTE...
OH.... OH NO...
WHSHHHHH

WHEEE. I'M FLYIN' ... UH...
FUZZY IMAGE... WHAT AM I GETTING? OH BOY?
CONCENTRATE, MURDOCK! MAP EACH SPIKE!
FAST!
NO ROOM FOR A SCREW-UP--
OWWWW!
ACID! SULPHURIC? MURIATIC? GOTTA BE OXALIC ACID... SMELLS LIKE GARLIC...
MUD FROM THAT POOL... HANDS SLIPPING...


PAY ATTENTION, MURDOCK! THIS SUCKER'S NOT JUST GOING TO DUMP ME OUT...
LISTENE FIGURE IT'S THUGS FROM THE SOUND OF HYDRAULICS...
...IT'S STILL TURNING... STILL ROTATING...
YEAH!
GOT IT!
COMING DOWN ON ME LIKE A CROWN OF THORNS!
COME ON!
UH... PAIN IN BACK, LEGS... HIPS WON'T PIVOT...
SMELL OF FUMED OAK. HEAT FROM CANDELABRA, NO... UP THERE... CHANDELIER... SOUND OF CRYSTAL TINKLING... PERSIAN RUGS... BOKHARA... NO, BALUCHISTAN...
IT'S A MANSION, A BLOODY MANSION, NOT A FUNHOUSE! WHOEVER'S BEHIND THIS HAS BIG BUCKS, GOOD TASTE, ENOUGH RESOURCE TO DESIGN AND INSTALL ALL THIS.
LADY OR THE TIGER. WHICH DOOR?

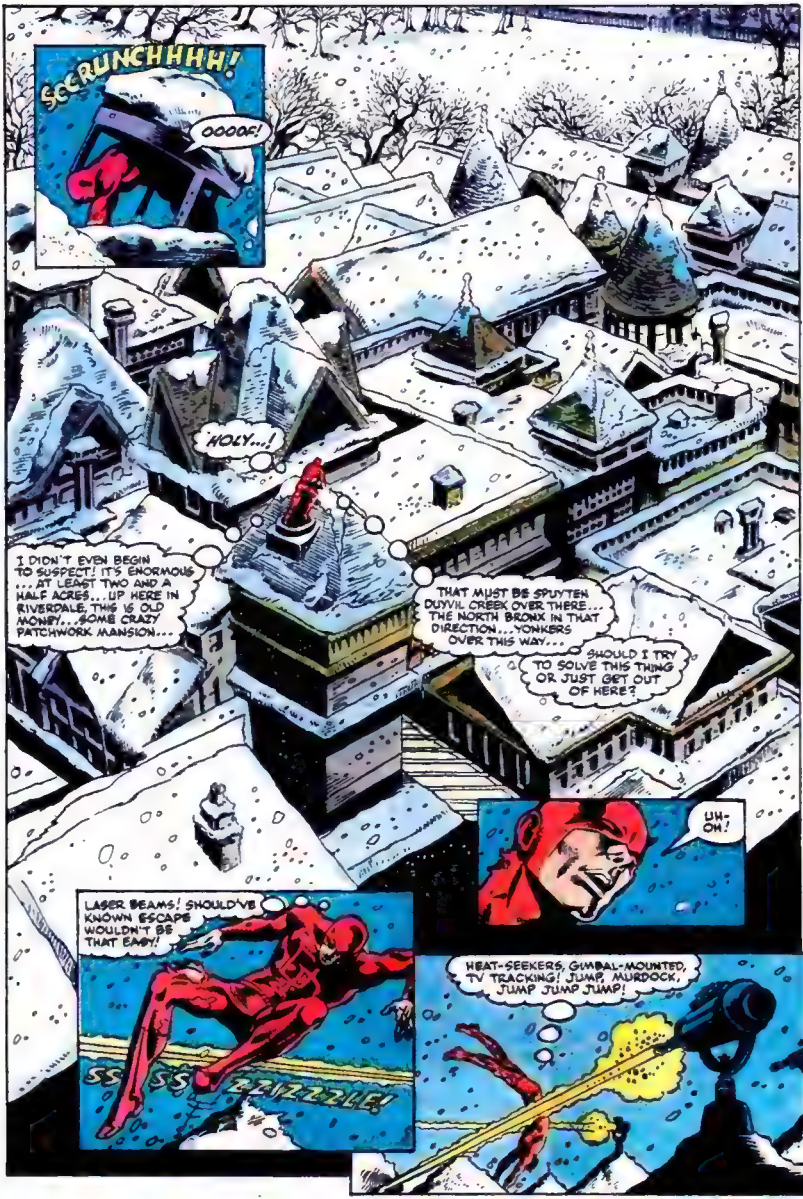
I'LL TAKE WHAT'S BEHIND DOOR NUMBER TWO, MONTY!
BKOO
OM!
DOOR NUMBER ONE.
SURPRISE!
FWOOOSH
THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM. LET'S SEE IF YOU PLAY FAIR, MINE HOST.
CUTE. JUST ENOUGH OF A SHOCK TO LET ME KNOW I'M STILL GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.
STILL WOOZY, STILL DOPED FROM THAT DART...
AGAIN WITH THE LONG HALL ROUTINE?
WRONG... AND WRONG. ANOTHER PHANTASM.
NO WAY OUT. LAST TRAP, MY INVISIBLE HOST? GETTING AN EYEFUL OF YOUR RAT IN THE MAZE?

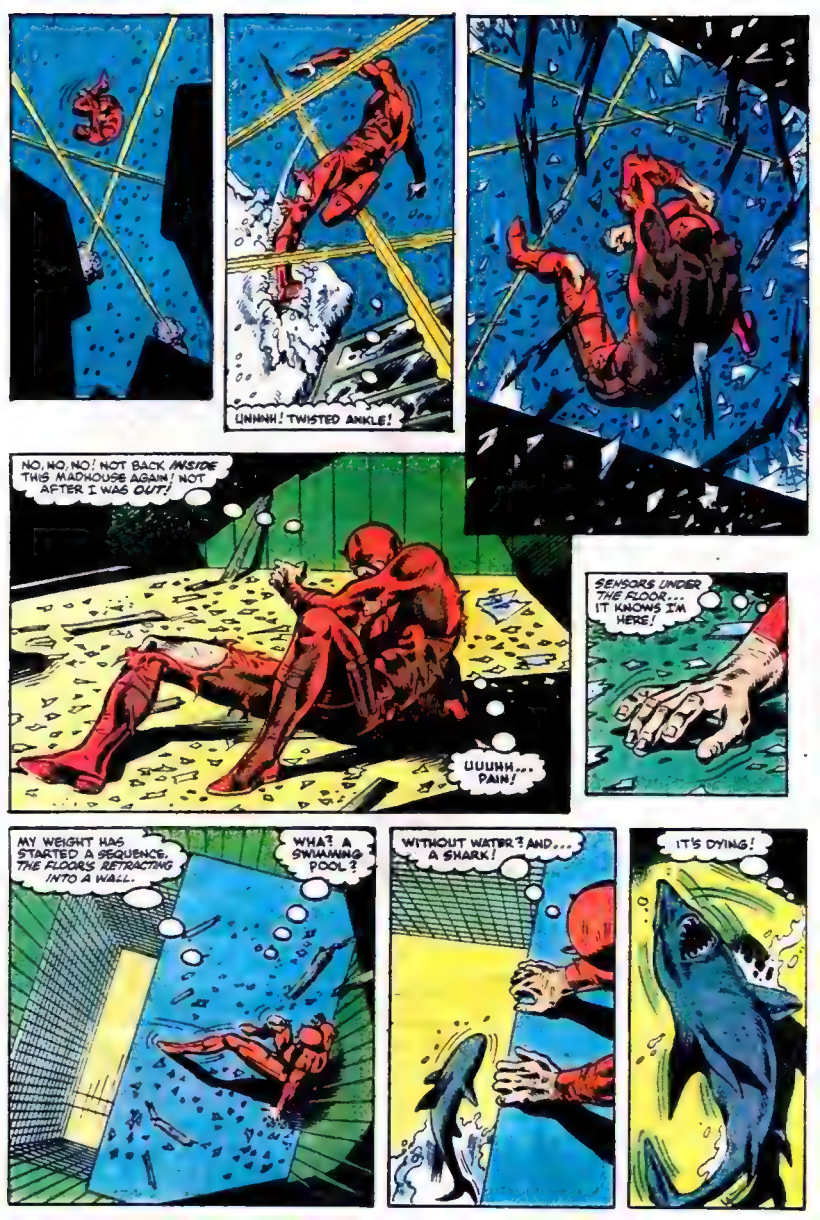
SOUND OF HYDRAULICS AGAIN.
OOOCH! SHARP! MUSTN'T TOUCH!
BILLY-CLUB NO GOOD. NO DOORS, NO WINDOWS.
OKAY, LOGICAL ANSWER: CAN'T GO OUT--MUST GO UP!
MITTENS, DON'T FAIL ME NOW!
GOTTA MOVE FASTFASTFAST BEFORE THEY SLICE THROUGH...

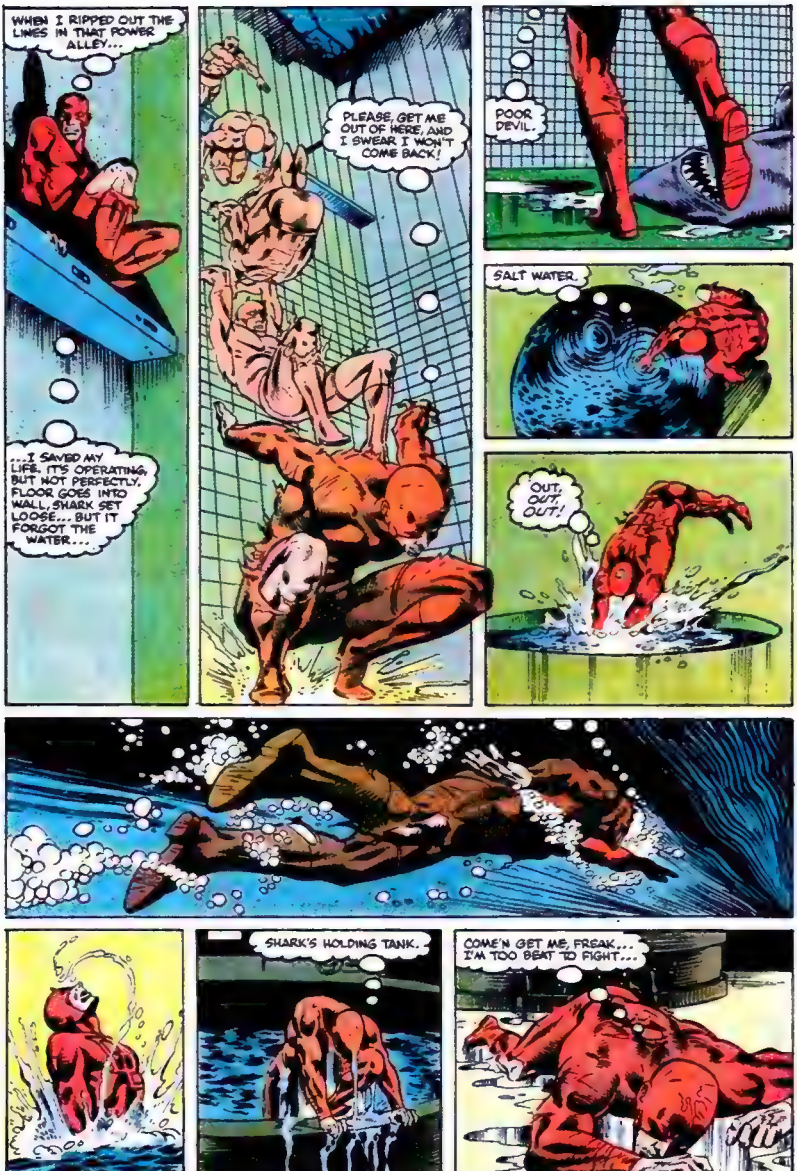

GOT TO CUT MYSELF OUT OF THE TRAFFIC PATTERN.
MY HOST HAS ME GOING RIGHT WHERE HE WANTS ME TO GO. LOUSY ITINERARY-- IF THIS IS TUESDAY, IT MUST BE THE PLACE WHERE YOU GET YOUR THROAT CUT!
LET'S STOP THINKING IN A LINEAR MODE...
LET'S JUST TAKE A DETOUR!
BACKSTAGE IS WHERE YOU ALWAYS FIND THE MASTER PUPPETEER.
CABLES, CONDUITS, SWITCHING EQUIPMENT. FEEL ALL THAT POWER... MAKES MY HAIR ITCH. CONTROL ALLEY.
OHHH. EVERY BONE IN MY BODY ACHES... THINK I DISLOCATED MY HIP WHEN I PUNCHED THROUGH. AT LEAST I'M SAFE IN A NEUTRAL ZONE FOR THE MOMENT.
UH...THE CAMERA ...STILL WORKING?
I SAID: NO PICTURES!
POWER IN THESE LINES. HUMMING. PULSING. HOUSE IS TALKING TO ITSELF. SAYIN' WHAT, BABY?
THINK! GOT TO CLEAR THE FOG. SOMEWHERE IN THIS MAZE THERE'S A GUY SITTING AT A CONSOLE, AND HE'S GOT THIS HOUSE TRYING TO FIND ME. EVENTUALLY ONE OF THESE GAGS IS GOING TO TAKE ME OUT.
CABLES... CONDUITS... SERVOMECHANISMS... CUT THESE AND MAYBE I REDUCE YOUR EFFICIENCY FIFTY PERCENT. STILL LOOKING FOR MR. HOUSE?

WELL, LET'S POKE A FINGER IN YOUR EYE...
HISSSSSSSS!
WHISTLE...
...WHILE YOU...
...WORK!
GOTCHA! GO ON AND SCREAM YOU SONUVA---
SREEESPREEESREE
YOWWW THE PAIN!
SNIFF SNIFF. BURNT ALMONDS. GOT YOU MAD, DID I, BABY? SENDING CYANIDE AFTER ME?
SEE YOU AROUND!
FLEX CONDUIT CHANNEL. TIGHT FIT. GOT TO KEEP MOVING.
CAN'T TELL IF I'M HEADING TOWARD AN OUTER WALL OR DEEPER INTO THE MANSION.
WHA... WHAT'S COMING?

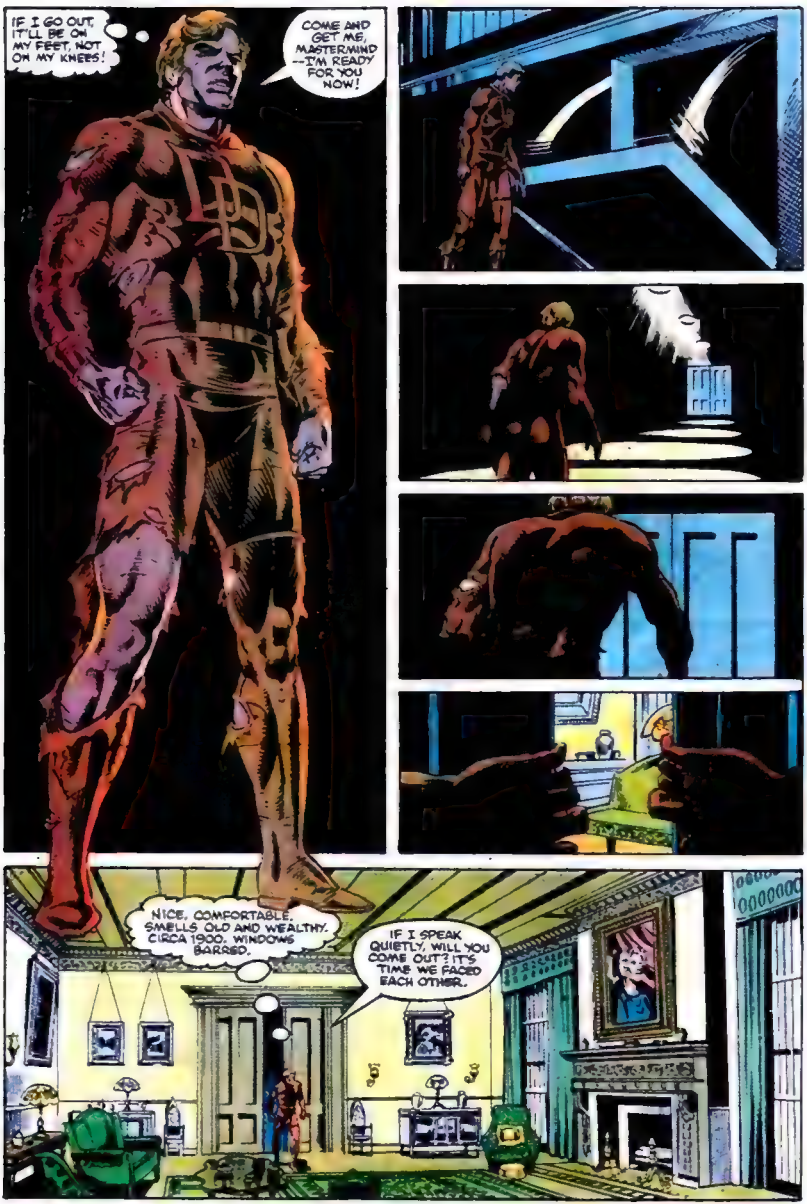
THE HOUSE FOUND ME! UGGHH— BLACK MAMBAS FROM AFRICA, TAIPANS FROM NEW GUINEA, TIGER SNAKES FROM AUSTRALIA!
ONE BITE AND I'M DEAD! ARE THEY MOVING THAT FAST, ARE THEY REALLY THAT BIG... OR AM I STILL HALLUCINATING?
TOO CRAMPED TO FLIP AND USE MY FEET. CAN'T REACH MY BILLY-CLUB, CAN'T MANEUVER...
GOTTA USE WHAT'S AVAILABLE.
WHEW, WHAT A STINK OF BURNING SERPENT!
SSSSZZZZZZ!
WHO'S AT THE CONTROLS? SNAKES... THE COBRA?
UP MEANS OUT, MAYBE.
CIRCULATION FAN, GOTTA BE THE ROOF.
CREEEEK
UGGGH!


SCCRUNCHHHH!
OOOOF!
HOLY...!
I DIDN'T EVEN BEGIN TO SUSPECT! IT'S ENORMOUS ...AT LEAST TWO AND A HALF ACRES.. UP HERE IN RIVERDALE. THIS IS OLD MONEY.. SOME CRAZY PATCHWORK MANSION...
THAT MUST BE SPUYTEN DUYVIL CREEK OVER THERE... THE NORTH BRONX IN THAT DIRECTION...YONKERS OVER THIS WAY...
SHOULD I TRY TO SOLVE THIS THING OR JUST GET OUT OF HERE?
UH-OH!
LASER BEAMS! SHOULD'VE KNOWN ESCAPE WOULDN'T BE THAT EASY!
SS SS ZZIZZZLE!
HEAT-SEEKERS, GIMBAL-MOUNTED, TV TRACKING! JUMP, MURDOCK, JUMP JUMP JUMP!

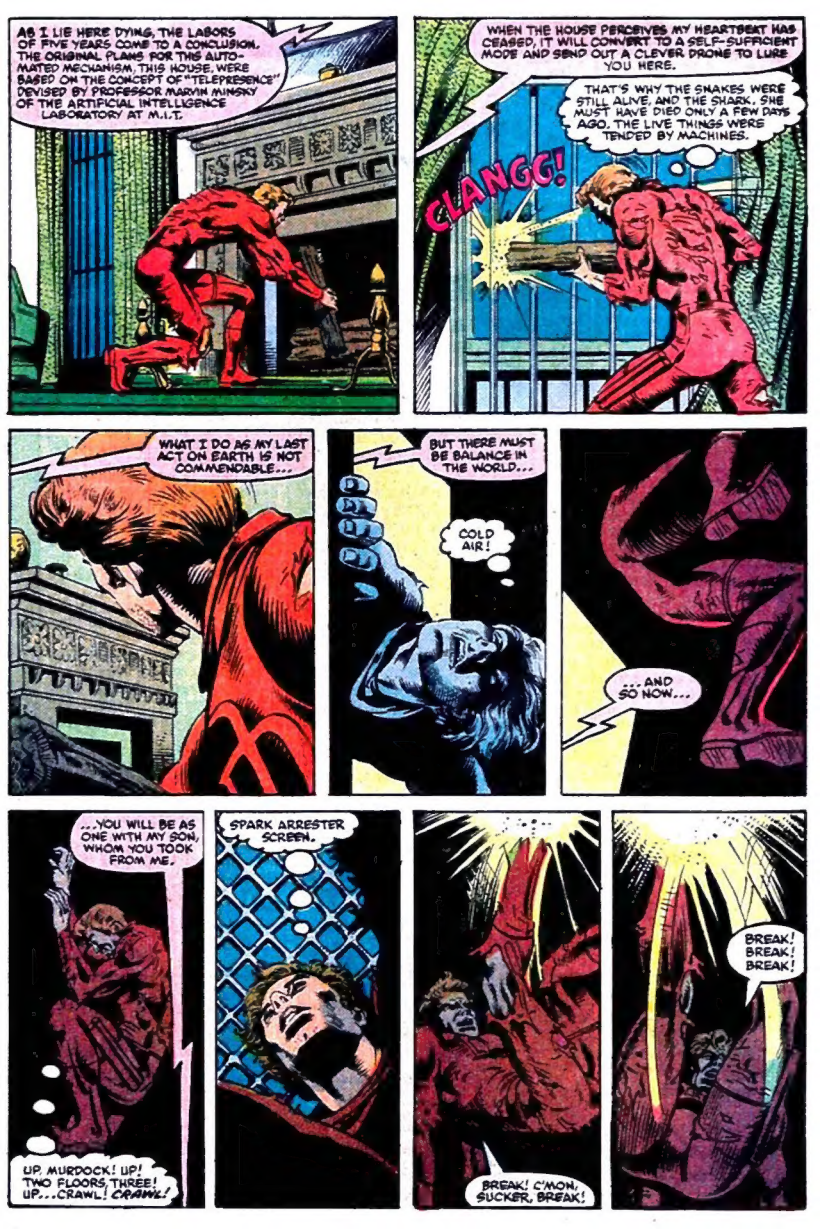

UNNNH! TWISTED ANKLE!
NO, NO, NO! NOT BACK *INSIDE* THIS MADHOUSE AGAIN! NOT AFTER I WAS *OUT!*
UUUHH... PAIN!
SENSORS UNDER THE FLOOR... IT KNOWS I'M HERE!
MY WEIGHT HAS STARTED A SEQUENCE. *THE FLOORS RETRACTING INTO A WALL.*
WHA? A SWIMMING POOL?
WITHOUT WATER? AND... A SHARK!
IT'S DYING!


WHEN I RIPPED OUT THE LINES IN THAT POWER ALLEY...
...I SAVED MY LIFE. IT'S OPERATING, BUT NOT PERFECTLY. FLOOR GOES INTO WALL, SHARK SET LOOSE... BUT IT FORGOT THE WATER...
PLEASE, GET ME OUT OF HERE, AND I SWEAR I WON'T COME BACK!
POOR DEVIL.
SALT WATER.
OUT, OUT, OUT!
SHARK'S HOLDING TANK.
COME'N GET ME, FREAK... I'M TOO BEAT TO FIGHT...

MORE GAS...FEAR... WHAT CRIPPLES US...
"SUFFOCATION...
"BURNED ALIVE...
"DEATH OF A... LOVED ONE... OH NO, NO...
"FALLING... I'M FALLING...
"RIDICULE ...A FOOL ...A FOOL...
"AMPUTATION ...CRAWL..."
THIS IS HOW THEY BROKE WINSTON SMITH IN "1984"...ROOM 101 ...HUMAN FEAR...
STICK...I DIDN'T FORGET...
AUMMMMMMMMM


IF I GO OUT, IT'LL BE ON MY FEET, NOT ON MY KNEES!
COME AND GET ME, MASTERMIND --I'M READY FOR YOU NOW!
NICE, COMFORTABLE. SMELLS OLD AND WEALTHY. CIRCA 1900. WINDOWS BARRED.
IF I SPEAK QUIETLY, WILL YOU COME OUT? IT'S TIME WE FACED EACH OTHER.

THAT OIL PORTRAIT OF THE OLD WOMAN... WHA...?
IF YOU ARE SEEING THIS MESSAGE, YOU ARE THE MAN THEY CALL DAREDEVIL. AND IF YOU HEAR MY WORDS, THEN SOMEHOW, MIRACULOUSLY, YOU HAVE ESCAPED THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THIS HOUSE WAS INTENDED.
MY NAME IS ELIZABETH DAWES STERLING. BUT FOR MY SON, PHILIP WALLACE STERLING, I AM THE LAST OF OUR LINE. IF YOU ARE HEARING THESE WORDS AND SEEING MY IMAGE, IT WILL MEAN I AM DEAD. AS DEAD AS THE SON I HOPED WOULD CARRY ON OUR NAME. BUT HE IS DEAD... KILLED BY YOU.
I WILL NOT DEPEND WHAT MY SON DID, NOR WHAT HE BECAME. AND PERHAPS DEATH WAS WHAT HE SOUGHT MOST IN THIS LIFE. YOU KNEW HIM, IN FACT, AS DEATH-STALKER, AND YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS TERRIBLE END SOME TIME AGO.* BUT HE WAS MY SON, MY ONLY CHILD, AND I LOVED HIM. AND SO YOU WILL PAY IN THE ONLY COIN THAT MATTERS. YOUR LIFE FOR HIS.
*IN DAREDEVIL #158. HE MATERIALIZED WHILE PASSING THROUGH A TOMBSTONE AND DIED INSTANTLY -- BOB.
YOU CAN'T HEAR ME, BUT LET IT GO. HE'S DEAD. LET IT GO.
OURS IS A VERY OLD, VERY PRESTIGIOUS AMERICAN FAMILY, SIR. THE NAME STERLING WAS ONE OF THE FIRST ON THIS CONTINENT. I HAVE MONEY, VERY OLD MONEY -- MORE MONEY THAN IS CONSIDERED RESPECTABLE IN THESE DAYS OF THE NOUVEAU-RICHE, AND I HAVE USED MORE OF THAT FORTUNE THAN MANY SMALL NATIONS EXPEND ANNUALLY, TO CONVERT THIS, OUR ANCESTRAL HOME, INTO A MACHINE WITH ONE PURPOSE -- TO LURE, TO TRAP, AND TO KILL YOU.
THE ONLY WAY THIS TAPE WILL PLAY IS IF THE HOUSE SENSES ANOTHER HUMAN HEARTBEAT. AND AS YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE THE HOUSE WOULD BRING HERE... I GO TO MY REWARD KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE WALKED INTO THE FINAL, ULTIMATE TRAP THE HOUSE CONTAINS.
I'M A FOOL... I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... THE END OF THE TAPE WILL ACTIVATE A FINAL DEVICE... I'M IN A RACE WITH HER LAST WORDS... KEEP TALKING, LADY!


AS I LIE HERE DYING, THE LABORS OF FIVE YEARS COME TO A CONCLUSION. THE ORIGINAL PLANS FOR THIS AUTOMATED MECHANISM, THIS HOUSE, WERE BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF "TELEPRESENCE" DEVISED BY PROFESSOR MARVIN MINSKY OF THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE LABORATORY AT M.I.T.
WHEN THE HOUSE PERCEIVES MY HEARTBEAT HAS CEASED, IT WILL CONVERT TO A SELF-SUFFICIENT MODE AND SEND OUT A CLEVER DRONE TO LURE YOU HERE.
THAT'S WHY THE SNAKES WERE STILL ALIVE, AND THE SHARK. SHE MUST HAVE DIED ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO. THE LIVE THINGS WERE TENDED BY MACHINES.
CLANGG!
WHAT I DO AS MY LAST ACT ON EARTH IS NOT COMMENDABLE...
BUT THERE MUST BE BALANCE IN THE WORLD...
COLD AIR!
...AND SO NOW...
...YOU WILL BE AS ONE WITH MY SON, WHOM YOU TOOK FROM ME.
UP, MURDOCK! UP! TWO FLOORS, THREE! UP...CRAWL! CRAWL!
SPARK ARRESTER SCREEN.
BREAK! C'MON, SUCKER, BREAK!
BREAK! BREAK! BREAK!

ANY SECOND NOW. LUCKY ME THAT SHE HAD ENOUGH HATE TO KEEP HER TALKING!

YOU ALMOST GOT ME, LADY. YOU AND THE GHOST OF YOUR CRAZY SON.
BUT IT'S ALL FINISHED NOW...
SKREEEEKKK
HISSSS
HISSSS
HISSSSS
HISSSSS
HISSSS
HISSSSSS
DOESN'T IT KNOW IT'S DEAD?
THIS HAS BEEN THE WORST NIGHT OF MY LIFE.
TAP TAP
ROMANOV

MATT, WHAT HAPPENED?
WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT OVER DINNER SOMETIME, NATASHA.
I THOUGHT... YOU WEREN'T TOO PLEASED WITH ME LATELY...
YEAH... KRAPOTKIN'S DEATH... I'M MULLING IT OVER. WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT LATER. RIGHT NOW...
*SEE LAST ISSUE--BOB.
LET ME STOP THE BLEEDING.
YEAH, SURE. AFTER.
AFTER WHAT?
AFTER A SHOWER. DIDN'T I LEAVE SOME CLOTHES HERE WHEN WE WERE...
YES, I THINK SO. THEY'RE IN THE CLOSET. BUT...
WHAT TIME IS IT?
QUARTER AFTER SEVEN.
I'VE GOT A COURT DATE AT EIGHT.
YOU'RE KIDDING! YOU AREN'T IN ANY SHAPE TO--
TASHA... DON'T BREAK MY BACK... HELP ME... IT WAS A BAD NIGHT... I NEED... A SHOWER...
FORTY-FIVE MINUTES LATER...
IS THE DEFENSE READY OR NOT? MR. MURDOCK, THE PROSECUTION IS READY... MR. MURDOCK!!
SORRY, YOUR HONOR, IT WAS... A TERRIBLE NIGHT...
YOUR PLAYBOY GALLIVANTING IS OF NO CONCERN TO THE COURT, MR. MURDOCK. LAST NIGHT IS DONE, THIS IS TODAY.
YEAH, LAST NIGHT IS DONE, ENDED. THE DEADLIEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE... AND THIS IS TODAY...
...AND I'M SAFE.